(vii) A Drugs and Cosmetics (Amendment) Bill, 2005, has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha in May, 2005 to amend the said act to proved stricter penalties to the offenders including a maximum penalty of life imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 100,000/-. It further proposed to make the offence non-billable, cognizable and to provide for designated courts for speedy trial of the cases.

The proposed amendments will make the law deterrent to the offenders involved in the manufacture or sale of spurious drugs. The involvement of enforcing agencies like Police will help in speedy investigation to book the culprits and in controlling anti-social elements in such activities.

Banning of tobacco advertisements, etc.

1350. SHRI R. KAMRAJ:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had taken a decision to ban smoking scenes in films and television serials;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government are considering to introduce a total ban on tobacco; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Government has prohibited person or character in cinema and television programmes displaying tobacco products or its use *vide* notification published on 31st May 2005 which will come into effect from 2nd October 2005. In cases of cinema and television programmes produced prior to this date having scenes with smoking situations and use of other forms of tobacco, it shall be mandatory to place a health warning as a prominent scroll at the bottom of the television or cinema screen.

(c) and (d) At present, there is no proposal to introduce a total ban on tobacco.

Overseas patients in India

1351. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite enormous infrastructure and speciality hospitals in India, Singapore surpasses India by far, in terms of medical tourism;

(b) the average overseas patients attracted by India during 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 and comparative figures of Singapore, China and Japan; and

(c) whether Government have gone into the causes of low medical tourism to India compared to other countries like Singapore with much speciality hospitals and other facilities and infrastructure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) : (a) to (c) As no data is centrally maintained regarding the number of foreign tourists visiting India for the purpose of medical treatment, a comparison of number of overseas patients visiting India with those of other countries is not possible.

Food and drug testing lab in Chhattisgarh

†1352. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Chhattisgarh have forwarded any proposal for setting up of a food and drug testing laboratory; and

(b) if so, by when the said proposal is likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) : (a) and (b) Under the World Bank Assisted Capacity Building Project for food safety and quality control of durgs, a new laboratory is being set up in Chhattisgarh (Raipur) for analysis of both food and drugs. The laboratory will be operational by September, 2008.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.